

BY STEVE DONOVAN

SPECIAL TO THE CLIPPER

'To question is the answer.' Some of you might remember that simplistic phrase as a sixties bumper sticker that years ago flaked off chromed steel bumpers but might still be stuck in your memory. It was simplistic but valid, and still is today. Fast forward to 2015 when all of us in Duxbury should be posing questions like: Is water a valuable resource? Should our aquifer be protected? Is our agricultural heritage important? Are greenbelts a good idea? Does open space add to Duxbury's quality of life? Based on information gleaned from past surveys of households, many Duxbury residents would answer the above questions affirmatively. In early March we citizens of Duxbury will be asked to vote on an article at the Annual Town Meeting that will put those questions to the test.

Article 15 will ask for authorization to purchase as Conservation Land 19 parcels roughly totaling 267 acres. These important parcels are comprised of bogs, streams, reservoirs, uplands and wetlands, all of which will go far towards completing Duxbury's Greenbelt Plan by adding areas identified in 1969 as critically important by a farthinking Conservation Committee headed by Dr. Lansing Bennett. Are you envisioning inflated tax bills arriving in your mailboxes? Banish those thoughts; there is no borrowing necessary. The money for this purchase is available in CPA reserves. We can purchase every one of these parcels, fill many of the gaps in the Greenbelt Plan, protect our precious aquifer and continue to husband a rich agricultural heritage without raising taxes.

Conservation Conversation

What is included in this proposed purchase? All the parcels are jewels, but the one that sparkles brightest is probably the Wright Reservoir, which helps keep our aquifer healthy, provides water for many bogs, includes uplands to be hiked and is a perfect place for a peaceful paddle when fall splashes color on hardwoods and bushes. This reservoir is hidden in the woods east of Temple Street. You can catch a glimpse of it after passing the Gifford Bog heading west on Temple by looking slightly to the right of the power lines. The Gifford Bog is also on the list. As you may have read previously, it is the oldest bog in Duxbury and was built by Stephen Gifford in 1845. Heading further West on Temple Street you pass between bogs known as the Cedar Crest group. In that Cedar Crest property is the largest cedar swamp in Duxbury. The swamp, plus other bogs and reservoirs, abut the Whiton Woods Conservation Area. The entire Cedar Crest watershed exits west to become Harlow Brook flowing under Route 3 and joining its waters with the South River.

Another important piece of land will complete protection of the North Hill Marsh. It is at the extreme north end of the pond and includes the Merry Dam, a small cranberry bog you skirt walking the blue trail around the pond, the south end of the pond's island and land on both sides of West Brook flowing from the dam. It is important to note that owning the Merry Dam will provide Duxbury the means of controlling water depth in the North Hill Marsh and that critical measurement dictates how much spring water can be pumped out for our town water supply.

There are other smaller pieces of land involved in this purchase plus a gift of ten acres of salt marsh land at the head of Duxbury Bay.

Joe Grady, Duxbury's Conservation administrator, was the moving force behind this incredible opportunity and is now working hard to put together maps and handouts to familiarize everyone with the scope and benefits of this proposed purchase. His thoughtful and committed approach to protecting Duxbury's valuable open spaces is legendary.

This historic article deserves Duxbury's support, and, if there are questions, they can be raised during the discussion following the reading of Article 14 at Town Meeting.

Please attend to support Article 15. Your one vote might make the difference between more development or more hiking.



Article 15 at this year's Town Meeting will ask for authorization to purchase Conservation Land.

